

OCA 71-365

Box 2

McCormack Folder

15 February 1955

Memorandum for the Director

Subject: Cong. McCormack's suggestion that the DCI appear before the House Committee on Government Operations.

1. At the time the National Security Act of 1947 was being considered by the Congress a jurisdictional fight arose between the Armed Services and Government Operations Committees (the latter then known as the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments) as to which committee would have jurisdiction over this legislation. The Armed Services Committees argued that the bill was primarily a revision of armed services legislation and therefore should be handled by the Armed Services Committees. In the Senate this view won out. The Government Operations Committees, having jurisdiction over reorganizations of Government departments, held that the Unification Act was such a reorganization and that their Committee should have jurisdiction. This view prevailed in the House, and it was before this Committee that the present Director appeared in 1947 in support of CIA. Therefore, in securing its basic legislation in the National Security Act of 1947, CIA appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Expenditures in the Government Departments (Government Operations). All major subsequent CIA legislation, however, has been handled by the Armed Services Committees in both Houses.

2. Following the passage of the National Security Act, the then Director of CIA, Admiral Hillenkoetter, made two formal appearances before the House Committee on Government Operations to report Agency progress. One of these appearances was on 27 July 1949, and the second was on 3 August 1950. As far as my records indicate, the latter was the last date on which this Committee was briefed on CIA operations.

3. In the past Cong. McCormack has, from time to time, suggested that the Agency consider briefing the House Committee on Government Operations on CIA progress, but we have not done so.

A major deterrent has been the size of the full Committee which would hear the briefing, as it is composed of 30 members. The Committee is considered by most Congressmen to be a relatively minor one in the House, to which a considerable number of freshman Congressmen are normally assigned. A certain number of senior Congressmen maintain seats on this Committee, however, either looking forward to becoming the Committee Chairman or to maintaining legislative balance on the Committee. The Committee is inherently a powerful one in that it has jurisdiction over reorganization plans submitted by the President for reorganizations within the Executive Branch, as well as jurisdiction over the bulk of the recommendations of the Hoover Commissions, past and present. In addition, the Committee's charter is broad enough to authorize the investigation of any Government expenditures which appear to be irregular, and in this respect its jurisdiction cuts across the lines of all substantive committees of the House.

4. The following present members of the Committee were also members at the time that the National Security Act of 1947 was approved:

William L. Dawson (D., Ill.) present Chairman
 Chet Helifield (D., Calif.)
 John W. McCormack (D., Mass.)
 Porter Hardy (D., Va.)
 Clare E. Hoffman (R., Mich.) former Chairman
 R. Walter Riehlman (R., N. Y.)
 Clarence J. Brown (R., Ohio)

5. Although Cong. McCormack has suggested in the past that we volunteer to appear before the House Committee on Government Operations, and renewed this suggestion at lunch with the DCI on 14 February, it is not recommended that we make such an offer at the present time for three reasons:

(a) The Committee is too large to give the type of briefing to which it would feel entitled without raising considerable security problems;

(b) It would appear to cut across our present plan to let the House Armed Services Committee "carry

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the ball" for us in the House through the appointment of a special subcommittee under Chairman Vinson; and

(c) We may at some future date in the present Congress have to make some form of appearance before the Government Operations Committees of both the Senate and the House in connection with the recommendations of the Hoover Commission, but such an appearance may well be before a subcommittee rather than the full Committee itself, thus reducing the security problem proportionately.

OGC:WLP/blc
Orig. - Add.

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